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#22

THE MAXX

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THE MAXX
MAXXIMIZED

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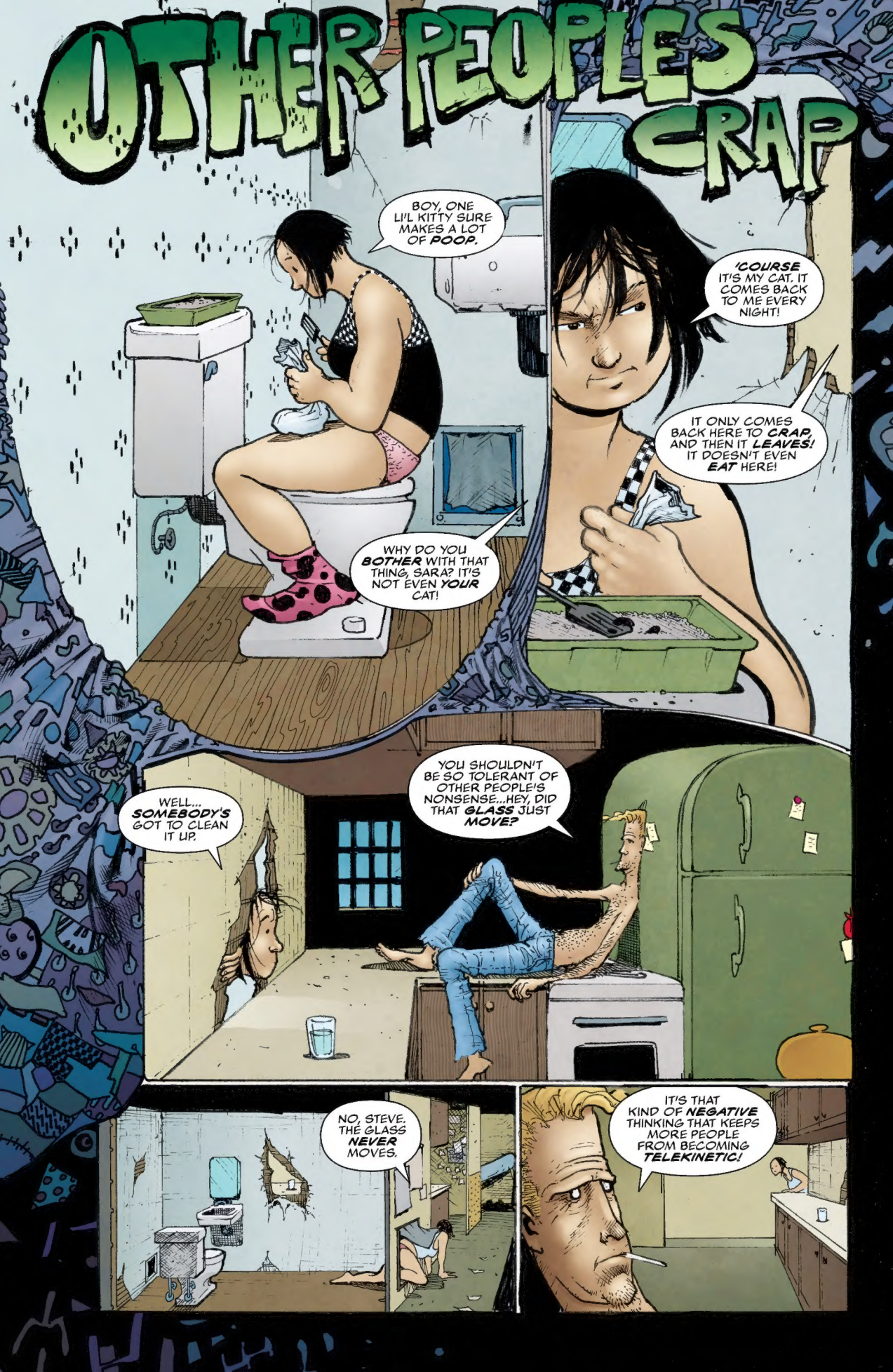
HEY, MISTER DOWN-AND-OUT!
AFFIRM YOUR BELIEF IN THE INSTITUTIONS THAT SUPPORT YOU.
START A SCHOOL SAFETY CAMPAIGN.
DONATE TO YOUR LOCAL CHURCH OR SYNAGOGUE.
LET OTHERS KNOW YOU CARE.
CRUNCH
TAKE THE RISK OF CLOSENESS.
ADOPT A PET.
REMEMBER, SELF-DOUBT SEEMS MORE OVERWHELMING WHEN YOU'RE TIRED.

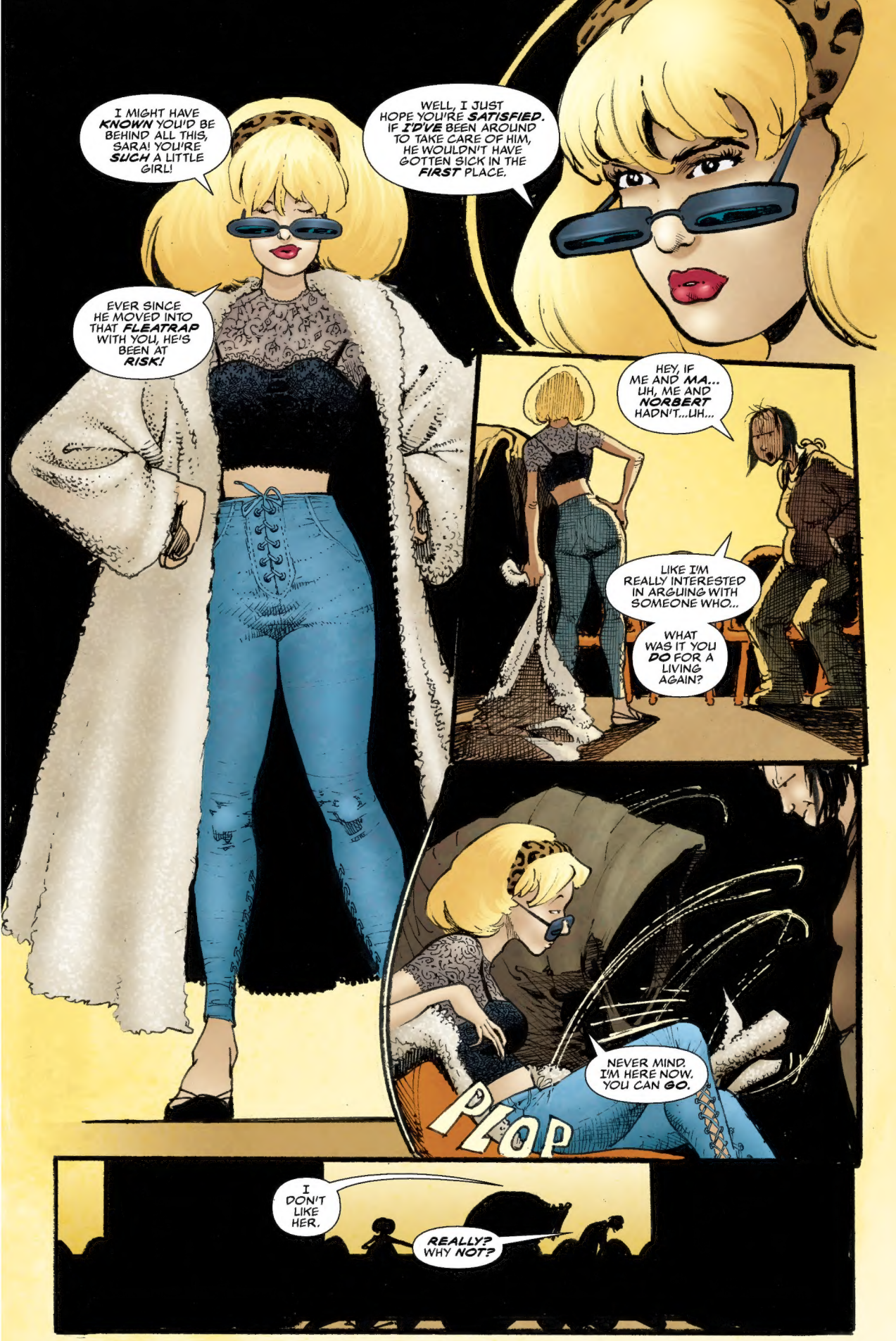

OTHER PEOPLES CRAP
BOY, ONE LI'L KITTY SURE MAKES A LOT OF POOP.
'COURSE IT'S MY CAT. IT COMES BACK TO ME EVERY NIGHT!
IT ONLY COMES BACK HERE TO CRAP, AND THEN IT LEAVES! IT DOESN'T EVEN EAT HERE!
WHY DO YOU BOTHER WITH THAT THING, SARA? IT'S NOT EVEN YOUR CAT!
YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO TOLERANT OF OTHER PEOPLE'S NONSENSE...HEY, DID THAT GLASS JUST MOVE?
WELL... SOMEBODY'S GOT TO CLEAN IT UP.
NO, STEVE. THE GLASS NEVER MOVES.
IT'S THAT KIND OF NEGATIVE THINKING THAT KEEPS MORE PEOPLE FROM BECOMING TELEKINETIC!

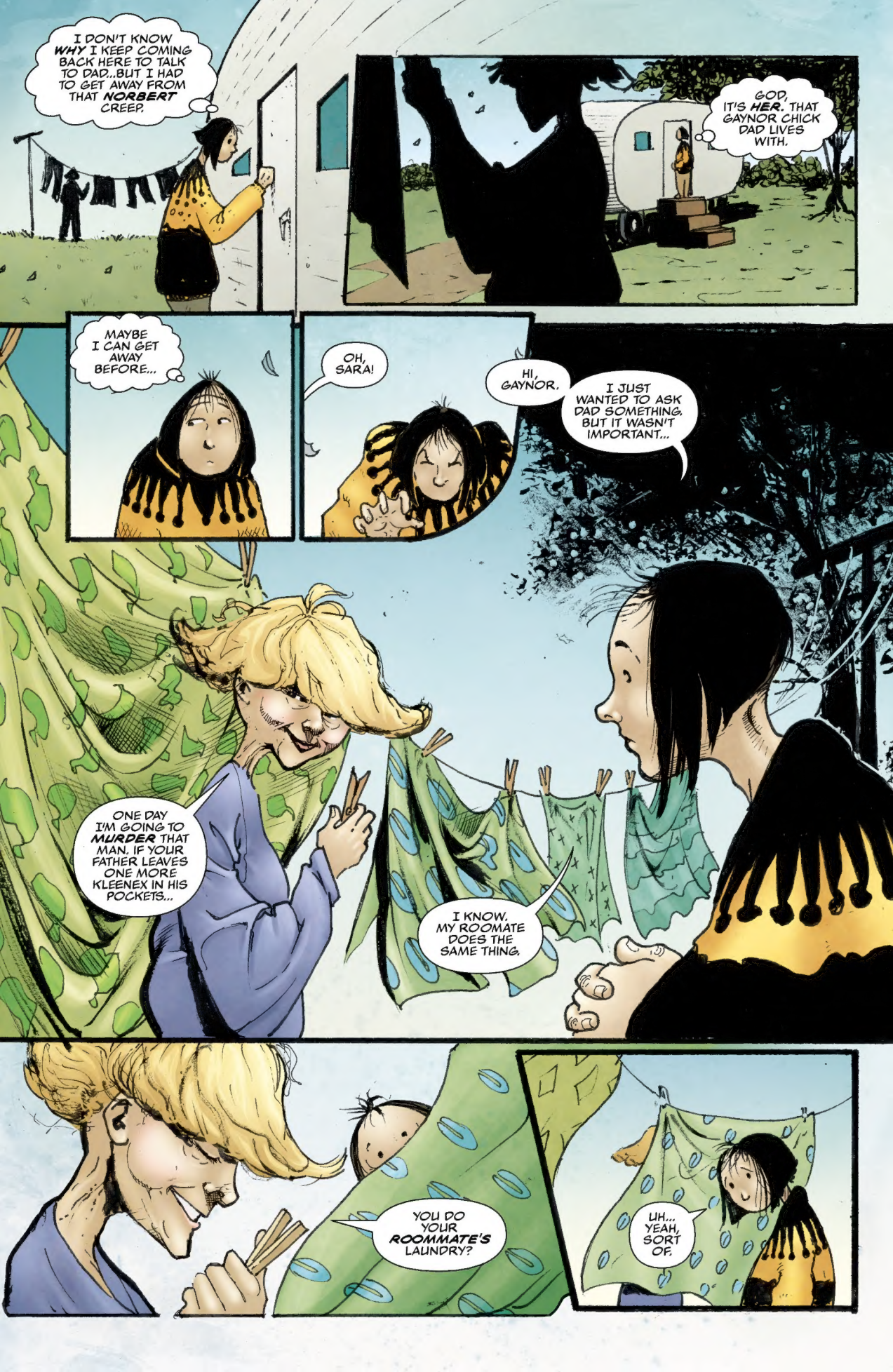
YEAH, ADVICE FROM A GUY WHO TRIES TO SOLVE HIS PERSONAL PROBLEMS BY MOVING A GLASS OF WATER WITH HIS MIND.
SO WHAT'S IN THE POT?
IT'S AN URN.
OKAY, SO WHO'S IN THE POT?
GRANDPA. DAD GAVE HIM TO ME YESTERDAY.
IT KINDA CREEPS ME OUT. CAN YOU HIDE IT AWAY ON TOP OF THE FRIDGE?
YOUR GRAMPS ISN'T THE UNDEAD GHOST OF THE HOMOSEXUAL DIRECTOR OF A HIDDEN DOMESTIC SPY RING, WAS HE?
NOPE. HE WAS A SHRINER. WHY?
JUST A PREMONITION.
I GET THESE FLASHES OF INSIGHT, YOU KNOW.
YES, YOU'RE AN EXCEPTIONAL PERSON. I JUST WISH OCCASIONALLY YOU'D GET A FLASH OF REALITY.
UFO REPORT
ESP AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIMENTS
SETH SPEAKS
ROSWELL CRASH 1947
BRAIN FOOD
X-FILES
MOVING WATER WITH YOUR MIND
EDGAR CASEY
MIND POWER
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
NEVER MIND.

3 A.M.
ARRRGHHH!
STEVE...
GNAAHH. I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD, SARA.
OH, GEEZ. GET UP, STEVE. I GOTTA GET YOU TO A DOCTOR. I CAN'T CARRY YOU MYSELF. I NEED HELP...
OH GREAT. WHAT NOW?
SARA, IT'S ME!
NO... THE MAXX! I NEED TO TALK TO YOU, SARA.
NORBERT!
I'LL CARRY YOUR FRIEND TO THE TRIAGE-CLINIC. I APPEARED IN THE NICK OF TIME BECAUSE I AM...
THE MAXX!
GNAUUH.

NORBERT, IF YOU SAY "MAXX" ONE MORE TIME...
BUT I AM HIM. I LIVED IN PARADISE WITH A BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS...
...AND AN UGLY YELLOW WYRM NAMED IAGO. BUT THE WORM WAS SMALL AND HAD NO POWER. NOW...
MAN, I COULDN'T FIND STEVE'S GINGRICH-STAMPS...
SNOORRF
I BET THEY WON'T TREAT HIM WITHOUT THEM...
THE EVIL IAGO IS LOOSE IN THIS WORLD. HE'S GOT A LIST...
IT WOULD BE SO NICE IF ONE PERSON I KNEW WASN'T NUTS!
...AND HE'S CHECKING IT TWICE! I HAVE TO STOP HIM BEFORE...
IF YOU TURN OUT TO BE A BUM I HIT IN AN ACCIDENT I'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT, I'M REALLY GONNA BE PISSED.

I AM NOT HUMAN. I AM AN EQUINE ELEMENTAL... A HORSE.
UH-HUH.
WHUMP
YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME.
SIGH
WAIT A MINUTE! YOU MEAN I COULD JUST PULL THIS HOOD BACK, AND YOU'D BE A HORSE UNDER HERE?
SARA! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY STEVE?!
SKYE. GREAT. LIKE I REALLY NEEDED ANOTHER PROCTOLOGICAL EXAM RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
NO, WAIT! YOU MUSTN'T SEE MY TRUE FACE YET. YOU DON'T BELIEVE.
RIIIGGHHT!

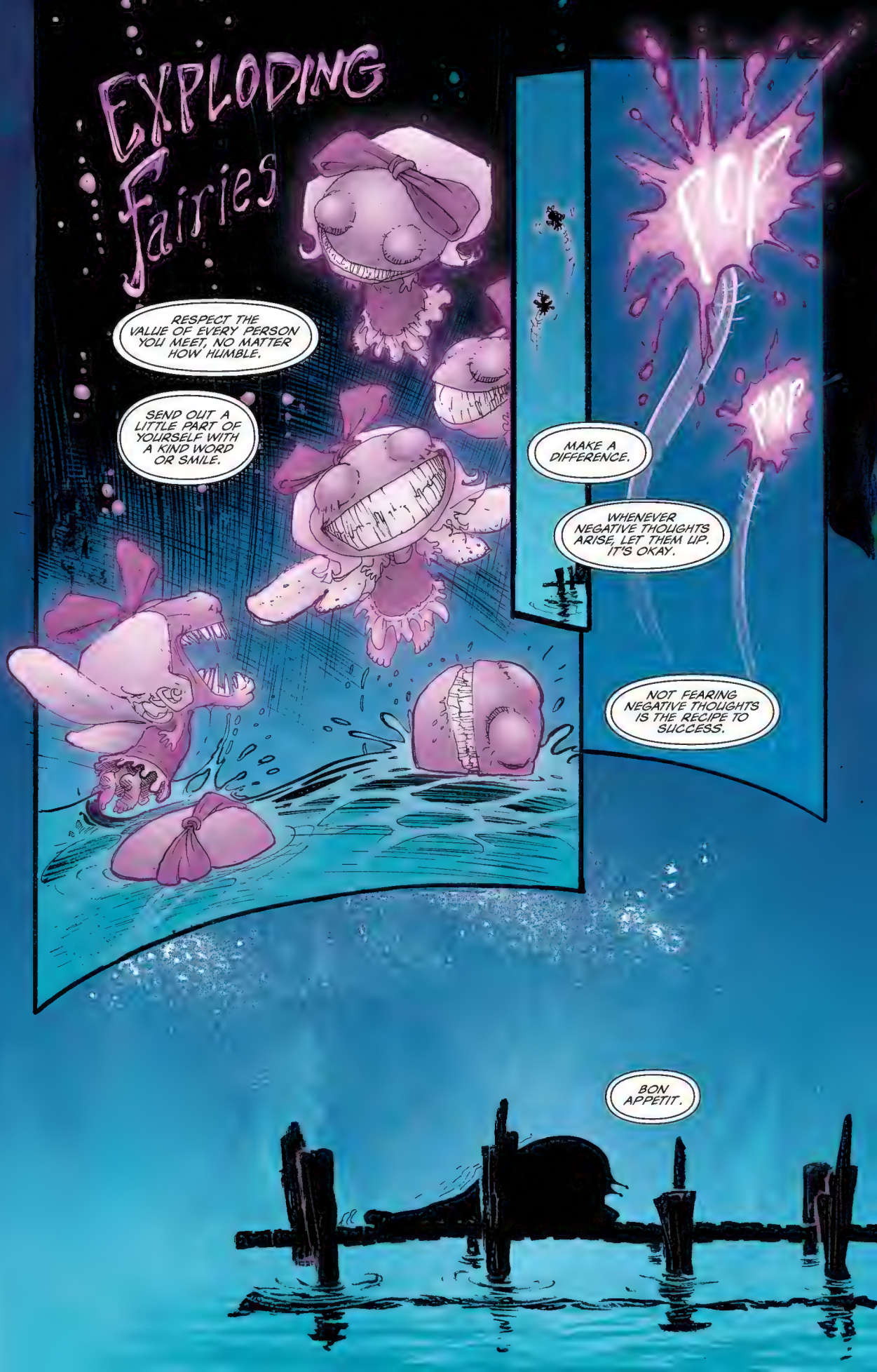

I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN YOU'D BE BEHIND ALL THIS, SARA! YOU'RE SUCH A LITTLE GIRL!
WELL, I JUST HOPE YOU'RE SATISFIED. IF I'D'VE BEEN AROUND TO TAKE CARE OF HIM, HE WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN SICK IN THE FIRST PLACE.
EVER SINCE HE MOVED INTO THAT FLEATRAP WITH YOU, HE'S BEEN AT RISK!
HEY, IF ME AND MA... UH, ME AND NORBERT HADN'T...UH...
LIKE I'M REALLY INTERESTED IN ARGUING WITH SOMEONE WHO...
WHAT WAS IT YOU DO FOR A LIVING AGAIN?
PLOP
NEVER MIND. I'M HERE NOW. YOU CAN GO.
I DON'T LIKE HER.
REALLY? WHY NOT?


I DON'T KNOW WHY I KEEP COMING BACK HERE TO TALK TO DAD..BUT I HAD TO GET AWAY FROM THAT NORBERT CREEP.
GOD, IT'S HER. THAT GAYNOR CHICK DAD LIVES WITH.
MAYBE I CAN GET AWAY BEFORE...
OH, SARA!
HI, GAYNOR.
I JUST WANTED TO ASK DAD SOMETHING. BUT IT WASN'T IMPORTANT...
ONE DAY I'M GOING TO MURDER THAT MAN. IF YOUR FATHER LEAVES ONE MORE KLEENEX IN HIS POCKETS...
I KNOW. MY ROOMATE DOES THE SAME THING.
YOU DO YOUR ROOMMATE'S LAUNDRY?
UH... YEAH, SORT OF.

IT'S OKAY. IT'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF.
ALTHOUGH WE COMPLAIN, MAYBE WE'RE THE TYPE THAT SECRETLY DRAWS COMFORT FROM TAKING CARE OF OTHER PEOPLE.
UH, RIGHT.
LISTEN, GAYNOR... I DON'T KNOW YOU VERY WELL, BUT THERE'S SOME STUFF ABOUT MY DAD YOU NEED TO KNOW.
HONEY, THIS ISN'T ALL ABOUT THAT EVIL-SORCERER-RAPING-AND-KILLING-AND-LOSING-HIS-HEAD-THING, IS IT?
MY DEAR, I KNOW ALL THAT.
YOU DO?
OF COURSE. ARTIE TOLD ME YEARS AGO.
HE WAS MENTALLY ILL...
SO HE'S DUPED YOU TOO?
EVERYBODY TAKES HIS SIDE! DOESN'T IT BOTHER YOU WHAT HE DID TO THOSE WOMEN?
I--
LOOK, YOU DON'T GET IT, YOU'RE IN DANGER!
HE'LL DESTROY YOU TOO! I KNOW HIM!
LISTEN TO YOURSELF, CHILD. FOR THE LAST EIGHT YEARS HE'S WORKED WITH ABUSED WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THAT'S HOW I MET HIM!
SARA--? ARE YOU OKAY?
THIS COULDN'T GET ANY @#$%&*% WEIRDER.

STEVE! YOU'RE HOME! HOW'D YOU GET BACK FROM THE CLINIC? IT'S FIVE MILES!
I WALKED, AFTER YOU DESERTED ME. NOT THAT I'M BLAMING YOU.
SO HOW'D IT GO WITH YOUR DAD?
HE WASN'T THERE. BUT YOU WON'T BELIEVE THE LOAD OF CRAP HE'S GOT HIS GIRLFRIEND BELIEVING.
WHY DIDN'T SKYE BRING YOU BACK?
SKYE? SKYE WASN'T THERE...IT'S ALL RIGHT, SARA. I WAS NEVER ACTUALLY THAT SICK.
SEE, YESTERDAY I ATE FIFTEEN BOXES OF CEREAL...
OMIGOD. WITH ALL THAT SUGAR AND NICOTINE? WHY?
I...I NEEDED THE RUSH. IT MAKES MY MIND STRONGER!
SO YOU GAVE YOURSELF ANGINA AND GOD KNOWS WHAT ELSE, ALL SO YOU CAN MOVE THAT STUPID WATER GLASS?
I CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE, STEVE.

CLIC
LESSEE... ROOMMATE...ARTISTIC, MIXED GENDERS, FULL-SPECTRUM DIET, SANE...
HERE'S SOMEBODY...27, BODY-POET, AFRI-CAUK, DEGREE IN FABRIC SYNTHESIS...
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT BODY-POETRY...
MOVE
MOVE
MOVE
OKAY, THAT'S IT. THINGS HAVE GOTTA CHANGE AROUND HERE!
I'LL CLEAN UP. I'LL GET A REAL JOB!
NO MORE NICOTINE CEREAL!
LOOPY CRAP
AND SKYE?
PAST TENSE, I SWEAR! I'M NOT PUTTING UP WITH ANYMORE OF HER ABUSE. SHE'S OUT!
FRUITY
JUNKY CRAB
AND THE META-PHIZ?
I'LL CUT WAY BACK. DOWN TO HALF AN HOUR OF GLASS MOVING BEFORE BED, REALLY!
AND THIS ISN'T LIKE ALL THE OTHER TIMES, SARA. THIS TIME'S FOR REAL!
AND BY THE WAY, DON'T FEEL GUILTY. I KNOW THE THREATENING TO KICK ME OUT IS YOUR WAY OF TAKING CARE OF ME.
GRRRR
I UNDER-STAND, REALLY. G'NIGHT.
GRRRRR

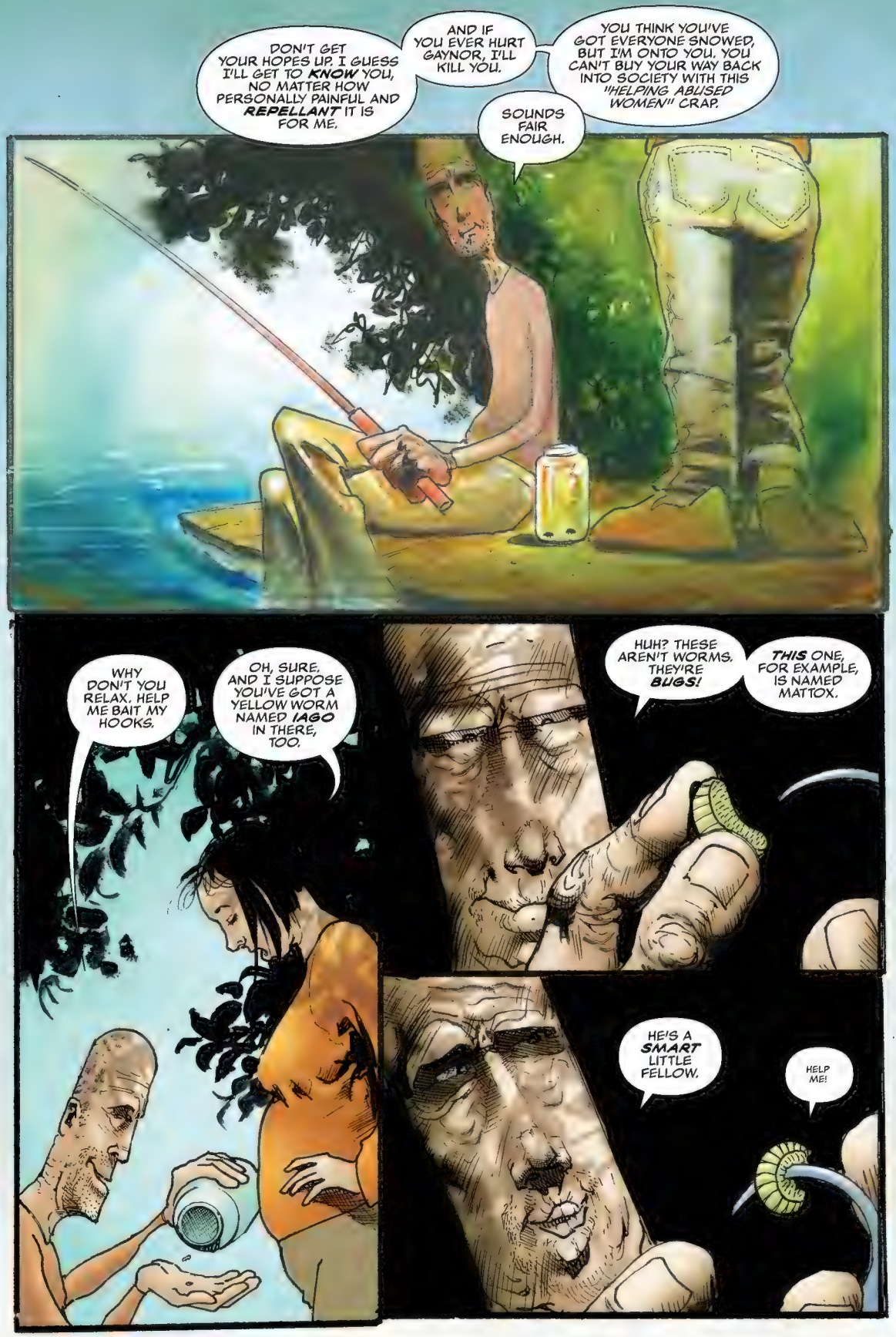

EXPLODING Fairies
RESPECT THE VALUE OF EVERY PERSON YOU MEET, NO MATTER HOW HUMBLE.
SEND OUT A LITTLE PART OF YOURSELF WITH A KIND WORD OR SMILE.
POP
POP
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
WHENEVER NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ARISE, LET THEM UP. IT'S OKAY.
NOT FEARING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS IS THE RECIPE TO SUCCESS.
BON APPETIT.

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ARE LIKE BAD FAIRIES WHICH MUST BE FED TO STAY ALIVE.
STARVE THOSE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS!
WITHOUT ANYTHING TO EAT, THEY'LL JUST FLOAT UP AND MAGICALLY DISAPPEAR.
SPLASH
AND REMEMBER, REMOVE DANGEROUS HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE. CARING FOR OTHERS' SAFETY IS A SIGN THAT YOU CARE FOR THEM!

I ended up treating Steve like a pet not a person. What's wrong with me? I'm no better than
CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK
SKYE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOU'VE BEEN DUMPED, OR DIDN'T YOU KNOW IT? YOU CAN'T JUST DITCH SOMEONE AND EXPECT THEM TO FORGET IT!
ANOTHER NEO-LUDDITE MANIFESTO, SARA?
GET OFF THE BED, SKYE! I'M WORKING HERE!
"WORKING" IMPLIES WRITING SOMETHING FOR ACTUAL MONEY.
DID I MENTION I'M BOOKED FOR THREE MORE WEEKS AT THE REEFER?
I GOTTA SEE STEVIE!
HE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE...! CRAP.

STEVE, REMEMBER HOW THE DOCTOR SAID YOU SHOULD TAKE IT EASY AND STAY INSIDE...?
LET HIM TELL ME! STEVIE...?
STEVIE!?
THERE YOU ARE! WANNA GO DOWNTOWN TO A HAPPENING? HOME BY TEN... PWOMISS!
GEE, I OUGHTA CHANGE...
YOU'RE FINE. LET'S TRIM!
WELL, I GOTTA BE BACK... I PROMISED TO CLEAN UP AND I GOTTA LOOK FOR A...
WELL, MAYBE JUST FOR AN HOUR... WE'RE GOING TO DREK'S, SARA!
He doesn't care if she breaks his heart. And she sure doesn't care.
SLAM
So what's my problem?

HMM, STEVE NEVER DID COME HOME LAST NIGHT. I HOPE HE'S NOT--
YOU KNOW WHAT, SCREW IT. HE'S A GROWN MAN.
I'VE GOT BETTER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT.
MAYBE I CAN FIND OUT WHAT GONE'S UP TO WITH THESE LIES HE'S TELLING GAYNOR.
HMM. GUESS NOBODY'S HOME.
MAYBE IF I FOLLOW THOSE HO-HO WRAPPERS...
OH. IT'S YOU.
HEY! YOU'RE BACK!


DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP. I GUESS I'LL GET TO KNOW YOU, NO MATTER HOW PERSONALLY PAINFUL AND REPELLANT IT IS FOR ME.
AND IF YOU EVER HURT GAYNOR, I'LL KILL YOU.
YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT EVERYONE SNOWED, BUT I'M ONTO YOU. YOU CAN'T BUY YOUR WAY BACK INTO SOCIETY WITH THIS "HELPING ABUSED WOMEN" CRAP.
SOUNDS FAIR ENOUGH.
WHY DON'T YOU RELAX. HELP ME BAIT MY HOOKS.
OH, SURE. AND I SUPPOSE YOU'VE GOT A YELLOW WORM NAMED IAGO IN THERE, TOO.
HUH? THESE AREN'T WORMS. THEY'RE BUGS!
THIS ONE, FOR EXAMPLE, IS NAMED MATTOX.
HE'S A SMART LITTLE FELLOW.
HELP ME!

I'M ALWAYS TAKING CARE OF OTHER PEOPLE'S CRAP.
THE CAT'S, YOURS, STEVE'S, SKYE'S.
WHO'S SKYE?
NEVER MIND.
I SWEAR TO GOD, I MUST BE WEARING A SIGN ON MY BACK THAT SAYS "SUCKER".
I THINK IT'S MORE THAT IT READS "WILL NURTURE FOR INTIMACY".
LIKE I SAID. THE ONLY WAY I CAN GET MY ROOMMATE TO DO ANY CHORES IS TO THREATEN TO KICK HIM OUT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO THREATEN HIM. YOU HAVE OTHER POWERS AT YOUR DISPOSAL. YOU'RE MY DAUGHTER, REMEMBER?
SPLASH!
GO TO HELL! I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M EVEN TALKING TO YOU!
SARA, WAIT!

BACK AT HOME.
SARA...SKYE LEFT WITH HER EX-HUSBAND...WHO PUSHED ME OUT OF A WINDOW...I THINK MY LEG'S BROKEN...
STEVE!
I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T REPLACED ME WITH A NEW ROOMMATE YET...SHE HAD ME EAT FIVE CANDY BARS IN THIRTY SECONDS TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN...I CAN'T SEE...
HE MUST BE NEAR CLUB DREK'S...

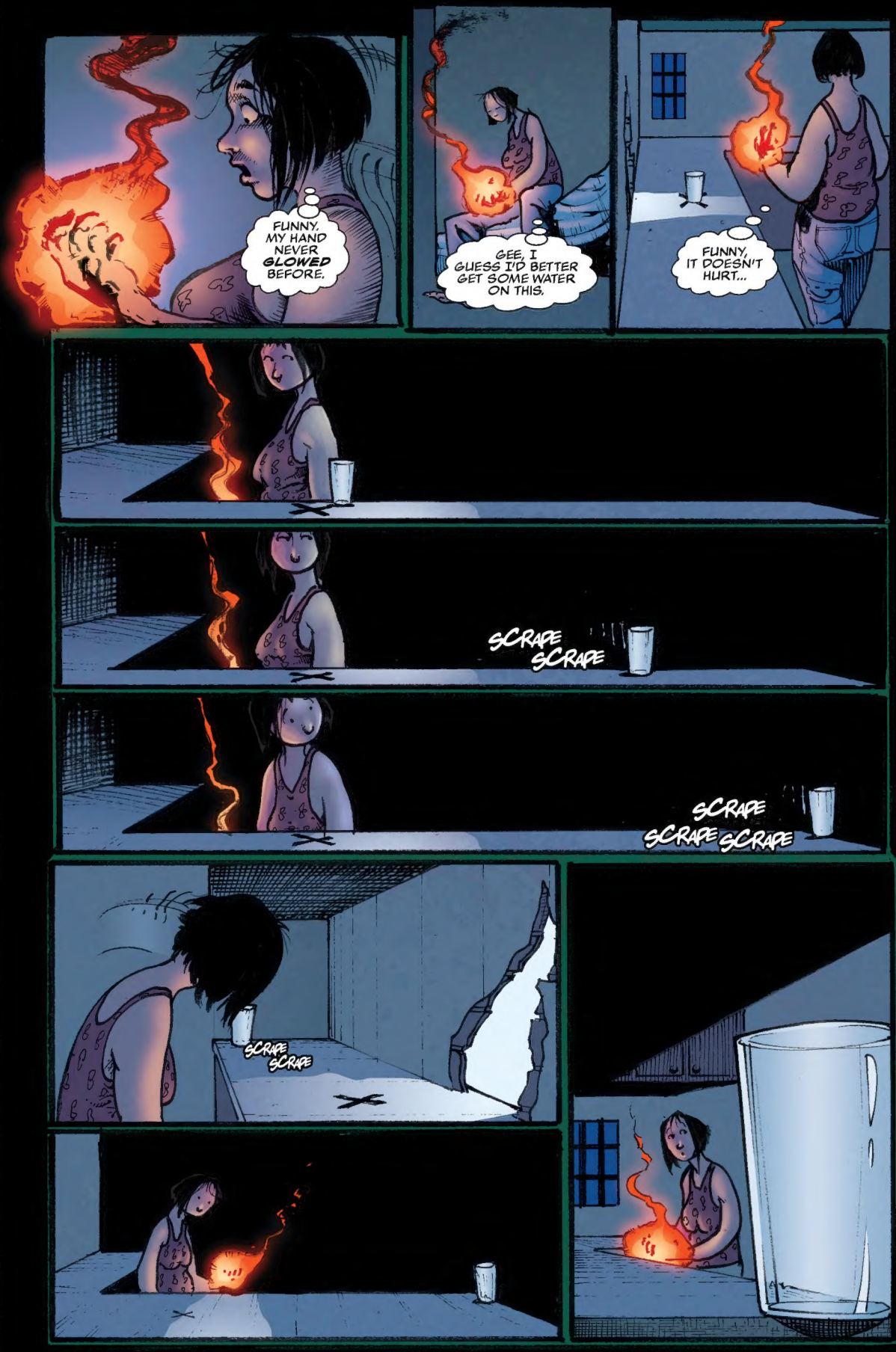
SARA!
OH, STEVE!
WHEN I WENT BLIND, SKYE JUST LAUGHED. SHE LAUGHED, SARA.
HOW'S MY LEG?
IT'S THE FIRST FLOOR, STEVE. YOU'LL LIVE.
I DON'T THINK SHE CARES ABOUT ME AT ALL. SHE'S JUST USING ME FOR MY POWERS.

THANK GOD YOU'RE HERE, SARA. YOU'RE MY ONLY FRIEND. ONLY YOU UNDERSTAND.
SHUT UP, STEVE.
YOU'LL SEE... ONE DAY THAT GLASS WILL MOVE, AND EVERYTHING EVERYONE SAYS ABOUT ME WILL BE WRONG.

MY ONLY CHANCE AT HAPPINESS IS MOVING OBJECTS WITH MY MIND.
EVERYBODY IN MY LIFE SEEMS SO LAME. GAYNOR PUTS UP WITH GONE'S LIES, GONE PUTS UP WITH MY ABUSE, STEVE PUTS UP WITH SKYE, AND I PUT UP WITH STEVE. BUT THE QUESTION IS, WHY?
WHY AM I AFRAID TO LET ANYONE TAKE CARE OF ME?
GOD! I HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT HIM FOR YEARS! HE WAS THAT KID IN HIGH SCHOOL THAT HUMILIATED ME!
I REMEMBER I SWORE I'D NEVER OPEN UP TO ANYONE AGAIN...BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. MY SICK MIND HAD ALREADY LEARNED THE LESSON THAT HUMILIATION IS THE PRICE OF LOVE.
JIMMY...!
IT'S LIKE SOMEHOW PART OF ME ACTUALLY BELIEVES THAT I DON'T DESERVE TO FEEL INTIMACY UNLESS I PUT UP WITH SOMEONE'S CRAP.
THAT'S THE SIGN I STUCK ON MY OWN BACK.

...SO THEN I CALLED YOU. AND JUST BEFORE I BLACKED OUT, I THOUGHT I SAW A BIG YELLOW BANANA SLUG LEANING OVER ME... TELLING ME THAT THE GLASS WAS HALF FULL. BUT I COULDN'T HAVE, HUH?
NO, STEVE. YOU JUST MADE IT...
UM...STEVE? THIS BANANA SLUG WASN'T CARRYING A LIST, WAS HE?
I DIDN'T NOTICE. IS IT IMPORTANT?
PROB'LY NOT...COME ON LET'S GET YOU HOME.

WHUMP
WHUMP
WHUMP
I'M SICK OF STEVE'S TRIPS...BUT EVEN IF I CAN'T RELY ON HIM, I DO LIKE HAVING HIM AROUND.
HEY, SARA! I C'N SEE AGAIN!
DO YOU THINK THAT'S PROOF OF MY PARANORMAL POWERS?
NAH. THE NICOTINE POISONING JUST WORE OFF.
I GUESS YOU JUST CHOOSE WHAT CRAP YOU'LL PUT UP WITH...
...AND WHAT YOU WON'T.
OKAY, STEVE. I... AWW. POOR GUY.
zZzzzz.
WELL, AT LEAST THINGS ARE BACK TO NORMAL.
IF ONLY STEVE COULD DRAW A SENSE OF COMFORT FROM REALITY, INSTEAD OF HATING HIS LIFE SO MUCH HE MUST ESCAPE...


FUNNY, MY HAND NEVER GLOWED BEFORE.
GEE, I GUESS I'D BETTER GET SOME WATER ON THIS.
FUNNY, IT DOESN'T HURT...
SCRAPE SCRAPE
SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE
SCRAPE SCRAPE

LIZA CALLED AT 5 PM
LUNCH W/ KATIE
BIKCHAIR KEEPS CALLING!
WHOA! THAT WAS WEIRD!
MY HAND'S NOT EVEN WARM...
OF COURSE NOT, STUPID! IT WAS A DREAM!